

ROLAND EMERSON for BART BOARD

Green Party of Alameda County Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire 2016

Name: Roland "Skip" Emerson

Address: 830 Peralta Street

Phone: 510-244-1897

Email: skip.emerson@icloud.com

Website: www.Facebook.com/RBEmerson3

1. Please give a summary of your background and qualifications for the office of BART Board.

I am a working class BART rider from West Oakland concerned about the state of the BART system. I have been a non-profit Facilities Manager for 17 years and as such have dealt with budgeting and project management on very tight budgets. BART, for the past 20 years, has been my primary transit option and I have seen the decline in service and infrastructure and want to work to correct that.

3. How would you go about leading change that would result in better coordination between BART and other transit providers, especially AC Transit? What could BART do to improve it's coordination? Can you share some ideas about what you would do differently?

These are issues I have not considered as yet but am interested in learning more about.

4. Where do you stand on the proposed extension of BART service to Livermore? Further into Contra Costa County (for example Brentwood)? How would you ensure that the Board proceeds responsibly in whatever direction it goes, on these proposed expansions? How do your priorities compare with the BART Board's historic planning and priorities for expansion? Which do you prioritize, expanding the system or increasing capacity within the core? What is the logic behind your prioritization?

I believe that all extensions should be put on hold (complete what has been started) until BART can safely and with less service interruptions perform its core routes. Currently the infrastructure of the core system is in horrible shape after years of neglect. Money should be spent on getting the core back in peak condition with minimal delays and then BART can expand. Money can be spent to increase parking at outlying BART stations until then.

5. How would you work to minimize the financial impact of the San Jose extension on the core system?

I don't know much about this issue but look forward to learning more. As I said above BART has taken on more expansion than it can handle. Fix the core first then expand.

6. What would you do to ensure that a boondoggle project (like the Oakland Airport Connector) would not happen again?

Stop all expansion projects until the core system is up and running smoothly again.

7. Does BART still need a systems expansion department? Why or why not?

No, if all expansion is put on hold until the core is working again. Use that money to help rebuild the system or improve parking options.

8. Are you satisfied with employee safety? If not, have you any proposals to increase employee safety? Please include your thoughts and proposals regarding employee safety, including Train Operators' workplace injuries, and assaults on Station Agents.

This is an issue I would need to learn more about

9. BART has identified \$17 billion needed to keep facilities in a state of good repair. How do you plan to generate funds to maintain BART in a state of good repair?

Reallocate the expansion funds to getting BART back in working order and make sure that the system is proactively maintained in excellent shape, like it used to be.

10. What kind of cost savings do you suggest for BART?

At this time I am not sure but look forward to putting together options and suggestions.

11. What is your opinion of the MTC and its funding priorities for transit?

I would need to do more research on this issue before making a response.

12. What will you do to ensure that housing development on BART-owned properties provides below market rate (i.e. "affordable") housing, allowing low-income folks (who are the most transit dependent) the ability to live within walking distance to BART?

I believe that any 'transit villages' should be at least half or more affordable housing. Mandela Gateway is a great example of the type of housing projects that are needed more throughout the BART system.

13. Would you support a regional plan for back up in the event of a BART interruption of service? What would that be?

I would have thought there was already a backup system in place and if there isn't there needs to be. I will need to learn more about what does or doesn't exist before making a statement.

14. What will you do to expand "owl service" or to run BART 24hrs per day, the way NYC can run their trains 24 hrs per day?

It is a travesty that a world class region like The Bay Area doesn't have 24 hour train service, even if that service was downtown to downtown every 30 minute to an hour, it's ridiculous that it doesn't exist. This leads to the issue of a second Transbay Tube, and the need of one over the need to expand. Make the core system work and work well. And in building the new tube correct the bottle neck at West Oakland Station and put that entire line underground.

15. What do you think about the pilot plan for bikes on BART at all hours?

That was one of the dumbest decision BART and the Board have made. I get the idea and why it's needed but on the crowded trains of today it is a safety hazard and a nuisance. Caltrain has the right idea and that's to make the last car a bike car.; remove all the seats and add poles so that riders can get on and off with their bikes without issue. That is such a simple fix but there seems to be no practical thinking at BART.

16. Do you believe that public sector unions should have the right to strike? Please explain your answer. As an elected Director, what is your role in regards to contract negotiations? If elected, what will you do to ensure good faith bargaining efforts on the part of District Staff? What role do you believe the media should play during negotiations? BART engaged in negative campaigning against its employees in the 2013 negotiations. Do you support such messaging, and if not, what would you do to reverse that? What will you do to improve relations with workers at BART? What would you do to ensure the voice of workers is heard, as well as that of management?

I believe unions are a useful and needed organization but I do not think that public transportation employees should have the right to strike; just like fire, police, and nurses their job is crucial and it cannot be allowed. Regarding the other questions: The last strike is in the past and I would need to evaluate any future strikes on a case by case base.

17. Regarding the 2013 strike (including the hiring of Thomas Hock of Veolia Transportation) -- do you think the Board should have handled it any differently? Please explain.

I do not have any information about this, it is in the past and we should be focused on future issues and how best to handle them while learning from past mistakes.

19. How can you help strike a better balance between community service police and BART police, in terms of safety and funding?

20. Discuss the reforms for BART police since Oscar Grant. Do you feel these changes are adequate?

21. What are your thoughts on having an armed BART police force?

I do not know the particulars surrounding changes to BART Police after the Oscar Grant killing, that is something I would need to research. I do not think BART police should be carrying guns; Tasers, clubs maybe but not guns. There also has to be some policy changes regarding police activity and how often the system is shut down, they seem to be becoming a daily occurrence.

22. Other ideas you have to provide better service? (To reduce noise?)

I live a block and a half from the tracks in West Oakland and the noise pollution is outrageous. I'm not sure what the solution might be but it would be high on my agenda. Putting those tracks underground, like they should have been, would be one solution to the West Oakland noise pollution.

23. Will you oppose two-tier systems in pay or benefits at BART?

I'm unfamiliar with this issue, so would need to learn more before stating a position.

24. Please describe your viewpoint on Transit Oriented Development.

I am all for the concept but would need more research before expressing concrete beliefs.

25. Please describe the sources of the financial contributions your campaign has received. Please identify any sources from which or from whom you would not accept donations.

I have not received nor will accept donations for my campaign. I am relying on word of mouth

and my integrity to speak for me.

26. What endorsements have you received thus far?

I have received no endorsements and will not seek endorsements. Endorsements smack of cronyism and favoritism and serve no purpose in a fair election.

Skip

"Your life is an occasion...rise to it!"